

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Replace the claims with the following rewritten listen

1-62. (Canceled)

63. (Currently Amended) A cartridge, particularly for espresso coffee machines, for extracting a beverage from a particulate substance contained therein by means of water under pressure, the cartridge comprising:

a main body comprising a cup portion and a lid portion, the cup portion comprising a base, a sidewall and a rim opposed to said base, the lid portion being fixedly attached to said rim of the cup portion so as to define an internal volume of said cartridge,

the internal volume of said cartridge housing the particulate substance comprised within filtering means for retaining said particulate substance and for percolating fluid substances therethrough,

said lid portion comprising a lid port defining a first passage for percolation fluid substances, the base of said cup portion comprising a cup port defining a second passage for percolation fluid substances,

wherein said internal volume comprises comprising valve means mounted on said cup port which are resiliently openable under pressure of said percolation fluid substances during a beverage extraction phase, so as to allow passage of said percolation fluid substances through said cup port during said beverage extraction phase,

said valve means comprising a pad or disc of a resilient material comprising a through slit that is normally closed, for insulating the internal volume of said cartridge from external environment and for retaining fluid residuals inside said internal volume when said beverage extraction has been terminated,

said valve means, in their opened condition, allowing passage of said percolation fluid substances through said slit, for increasing formation and stability of crema in the beverage extracted from said cartridge when said particulate substance comprises ground coffee, and

said cup port comprising fluid flow hurdles formed on its internal surface or mounted therein, for breaking direct fluid flow passing through said cup port.

64. (Previously Presented) The cartridge of claim 63, wherein said valve means are normally closed when no pressure of said percolation fluid substances is applied, so as to insulate the internal volume of said cartridge from external environment when said cartridge is not installed into a beverage extraction machine.

65. (Previously Presented) The cartridge of claim 63, wherein said valve means are resiliently closable as soon as said pressure of percolation fluid substances drops due to a termination of said beverage extraction phase, so as to retain fluid residuals inside said internal volume.

66. (Currently Amended) The cartridge according to claim 63, wherein said valve ~~means comprise a pad or disc of a~~ resilient material is selected from the group comprising rubbers, elastomers, flexible plastics, ~~said pad or disc comprising a through slit that is normally closed, for insulating the internal volume of said cartridge from external environment and for retaining fluid residuals inside said internal volume when said beverage extraction has been terminated.~~

67. (Currently Amended) ~~The cartridge according to claim 66,~~ A cartridge, particularly for espresso coffee machines, for extracting a beverage from a particulate substance contained therein by means of water under pressure, the cartridge comprising:  
a main body comprising a cup portion and a lid portion, the cup portion comprising a base, a sidewall and a rim opposed to said base, the lid portion being fixedly attached to said rim of the cup portion so as to define an internal volume of said cartridge,  
the internal volume of said cartridge housing the particulate substance comprised within filtering means for retaining said particulate substance and for percolating fluid substances therethrough,

said lid portion comprising a lid port defining a first passage for percolation fluid substances, the base of said cup portion comprising a cup port defining a second passage for percolation fluid substances,

said internal volume comprising valve means mounted on said cup port which are resiliently openable under pressure of said percolation fluid substances during a beverage

extraction phase, so as to allow passage of said percolation fluid substances through said cup port during said beverage extraction phase,

said valve means comprise a pad or disc of a resilient material comprising a through slit that is normally closed, for insulating the internal volume of said cartridge from external environment and for retaining fluid residuals inside said internal volume when said beverage extraction has been terminated,

~~wherein~~ said pad or disc comprises comprising surface ribs for allowing fluid passage therebetween and for supporting said particulate substance and said filtering means.

68. (Currently Amended) ~~The cartridge according to claim 66,~~ A cartridge, particularly for espresso coffee machines, for extracting a beverage from a particulate substance contained therein by means of water under pressure, the cartridge comprising:

a main body comprising a cup portion and a lid portion, the cup portion comprising a base, a sidewall and a rim opposed to said base, the lid portion being fixedly attached to said rim of the cup portion so as to define an internal volume of said cartridge,

the internal volume of said cartridge housing the particulate substance comprised within filtering means for retaining said particulate substance and for percolating fluid substances therethrough,

said lid portion comprising a lid port defining a first passage for percolation fluid substances, the base of said cup portion comprising a cup port defining a second passage for percolation fluid substances,

said internal volume comprising valve means mounted on said cup port which are resiliently openable under pressure of said percolation fluid substances during a beverage extraction phase, so as to allow passage of said percolation fluid substances through said cup port during said beverage extraction phase,

said valve means comprise a pad or disc of a resilient material comprising a through slit that is normally closed, for insulating the internal volume of said cartridge from external environment and for retaining fluid residuals inside said internal volume when said beverage extraction has been terminated,

~~wherein~~ said valve means comprise comprising a shim mounted on said pad, for

supporting said particulate substance and said filtering means and for allowing fluid passage towards said slit.

69. (Cancelled).

70. (Previously Presented) The cartridge according to claim 63, wherein said base comprises a plurality of ridges directly formed thereon and protruding towards the internal volume of the cartridge, so as to support said filtering means and said particulate substance and to define a fine canalization for putting in a fluid communication said filtering means and said particulate substance with said cup port.

71. (Previously Presented) The cartridge according to claim 70, wherein said ridges are arc-shaped and arranged along concentric arcs so as to define a plurality of radial and circumferential channels directly on said cup base.

72. (Previously Presented) The cartridge according to claim 71, wherein said channels are substantially 1 mm wide.

73-86. (Cancelled).

87. (Currently Amended) An extraction assembly to be mounted on beverage extraction machines, further comprising a support connectable to a water outlet of a beverage extraction machine and a cartridge holder securable to said support, said cartridge holder ~~for~~ holding a cartridge according to claim 63.

88. (Previously Presented) The extraction assembly of claim 87, wherein said cartridge holder has an internal shape substantially corresponding to the external shape of said cartridge so that said cartridge can tightly fit within said holder.

89-90. (Cancelled).